

*Published
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FREE ADDRESS

To the AUTHOR of the

ESSAYS on the CHARACTERISTICS.

I N

ANSWER to, his LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Dr. LOWTH.

Παῖς δὲ μαλισ' αὐσχυνέο σάτιον. PYTH.

Proximus sum Egomet mihi. TER.

L O N D O N,

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ГЛАВА ДЕЯНИЯ

в ЛОНДОНЕ в 1792 г.

Перевод с французского языка
M. de la Charpentier.

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Большой-Лондон.

A

F R E E A D D R E S S

To the A U T H O R of the

E s s a y s on the C H A R A C T E R I S T I C S.

Ever Honour'd and Worthy SIR,

BEFORE I enter upon a free discussion of your Letter, which is on a subject of such *infinite* importance to the World, as Yourself; you will give me leave, by way of Preface, to tell you a short story.

At a little country Village, not far from London, lived a Cook-maid, whom, for distinction-sake, we shall call *Margery*. She

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was

was a wench of a pretty, light, frothy smattering of knowledge, and got a good deal of reputation in her neighbourhood, by composing an *Essay*, against the use of Crabsticks, for brooms, besoms, and mops ; together with an *Estimate* of Madam Johnson's Receipts for Pickling and Cookery. But the success that she met with turned her brain ; and she became so puffed up with conceit and self-importance, that she was hated by every servant in the village ; but particularly by those in *the same family* ; to whom she behaved with so much pride and superciliousness, that they could not endure her company. Now it happened, upon a time, that the *Butler* was sent up to town, to settle an account of a *long standing* with the *Vintner* ; who, by-the-bye, was a sad, imposing, pestilent fellow ; and though he imported as good wine as any man in Christendom, he never sold a drop, with-

without adulterating it so, that it was scarce drinkable. Upon the *Butler's* return from London, Mrs. *Margery* ran up to him, with infinite curiosity in her face, and cry'd, “ Well, *Robert*, what news, “ what news ? ” “ Brave news, Mrs. *Margery*, I warrant ye ! I have given Mr. “ *Warbottle* such a dressing, that egad he'll “ remember it as long he lives.” “ 'Psha, “ what do I care for Mr. *Warbottle* ! ---- “ Harkee, *Robert* —— what does the “ **W O R L D** say of my quarrel with my “ *mistress* ? ”

I shall make no application of this story; but only caution the Doctor, when he sits down to write for the future, not to take it into his head, that the public will concern themselves about any dispute which he may have to settle with this or that author, whether “ *nameless* with a “ *name*,” or *nameless* without one. When I took up his epistle to Dr. Lowth, (hav-

ing some how or other most unaccountably forgot my man) I expected that it would have contained a full examination of the Doctor's ingenious, and entertaining *Letter to the Author of the Divine Legislation of Moses*; that it would have destroyed his positions, invalidated his arguments, and confronted his assertions. I was in hopes that the Reverend *Estimator* had entered the lists, as a literary prize-fighter; and that he was going to brandish the weapons of wit, irony, and humour, with an intent to return upon his antagonist a few of those severe thrusts, which he has given to his friend and patron. But how was I disappointed, to find that his behaviour was the same with that of a country clown at a wake, who jumped upon the stage, and after baring his pole, and shewing a few scars, and scratches, which he had had *time out of mind*, very fairly turned tail, without ever touching

touching a cudgel. I cannot help approving the Doctor's caution in declining the combat, as he is by no means a match for his strong and nervous antagonist; but why then did he blow the bugle horn, and call us together, as if we were to be entertained with some wonderful encounter? He does not seem to have any point to settle with the learned author of the Letter to Doctor W. and his Address to him is to the last degree both frivolous and impertinent. Nothing but a consciousness of guilt, put into a ferment by the leaven of vanity and presumption, could make him apply *to himself* those passages of Dr. Lowth's Letter, which he has laid as the ground-work of his charge against him. But let us examine the passages themselves, and we shall see this, in the clearest manner imaginable. The first paragraph that this very touchy *Estimator* finds fault with, is the following,

ing, “ The Divine Legation of Moses, it
“ seems, contains in it all knowledge,
“ divine and human, ancient and mo-
“ dern : it treats, as of its proper sub-
“ ject *de omni scibili, & de quolibet ente*; it
“ includes in itself all history, chronolo-
“ gy, criticism, divinity, law, politics,
“ from the law of Moses down to the
“ Jew bill, and from Egyptian hiero-
“ glyphics to the modern rebus writing;
“ and to it we are to have recourse, as to
“ an infallible oracle, for the resolution
“ of every question in literature.”

Now what is there in this passage, which is levelled at the *author of the Divine Legation*, who, at the beginning of it, is stiled Lord Paramount in science, that Dr. B. can, *with the least propriety*, apply to *himself*? Sure he must be the most cruel *inquisitor-général of syllables*, to twist and torture this sentence, in such a manner, as to draw from it any thing which

which has the most distant relation to himself ! He affirms, that it contains a clear allusion to something *that had been said* of the Divine Legation of Moses : and because he himself, in his Essay on the Characteristics, had called the *Divine Legation* an inestimable treasure of all true knowledge ; *therefore* this sentence alludes to him. I should pity the Doctor for being so ingenious in tormenting himself, if I was not sensible, that any little pain he may suffer from so doing, is more than compensated by the *pleasure* which he feels, in thinking himself of so much *consequence*, that a man cannot take the trouble of correcting a *Bishop*, but he will *go out of his way* to have a lick at *Him*. Shall I be so cruel as to rob him both of his *pain* and *pleasure*, by acquainting him, that it is as impossible Doctor Lowth should mean to reflect upon *HIM*, in the abovementioned passage, as it is that

any

any writer of abilities should think him *worth* his notice, unless like me, he has an idle, tooth-pick, coffee-house hour, which he does not know how to employ to better purpose?

The next sentence of Dr. Lowth's Letter, which our literary *Procrustes* is determined to torture, till it fits his own frame, is the following : “The demonstrator of “the Divine Legation of Moses, doth in-“deed in his pretensions, *bestrīde the nar-*
row world of literature, and hath cast
“out his shoe over all the regions of
“science.” A man of moderate parts
and sagacity would be terribly at a loss
to find out, how in the name of wonder,
this passage could be wrested in such a
manner, as to allude to the *author of the*
Estimate. But have patience, gentle rea-
der, and you shall hear how the *good Doc-*
tor makes it out, and proves, that he
himself is referred to, *non totidem verbis*,
nor

nor *totidem literis*, but by so plain an inuendo, that there is no mistaking it. Thus then begins his *modest* demonstration : “Whoever is *conversant* in **MY WRITINGS**, (they are the Doctor’s own words) must know, that in speaking of the prodigious, and more than human genius, knowledge, and learning of the author of *the Divine Legation*, I applied to him the following words of Shakespear :

Why man he doth bestride the narrow world,
Like a Colossus ; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs ; and peep about,
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

Now it is impossible that either Doctor Lowth, or any other man breathing can have read *Shakespear*, but myself ; much more, that he should make so excellent, and apposite a quotation, out of a book that is scarce known or heard of. “**MY EXPRESSION**” therefore, (for it is no longer

Shakespear's, after I have done him the honour to adopt it) "is so full, and of so particular a nature, has been so often, and with such perversion re-echoed from the caves of Flander, as BEING MINE AND MINE ONLY," (my dear, dear Doctor, how I admire your modesty!) that it is plain, he meant to point out ME, and ME only; particularly as he has so clearly distinguished it by his own Italics."

This is the sum and substance of the Doctor's proof, that he is alluded to, in the abovementioned passage of Dr. Lowth's Letter to W—: and from hence we may collect how admirably qualified he is to make a proper and just Estimate of men and things. That I have done justice to the Doctor's demonstration is undeniable, as all the passages marked thus (" ") are his own words. And now what must the world think of a person, who, with no better proofs than these that

that he is injured, shall presume to arraign the candour and integrity of a gentleman of Dr. Lowth's approved humanity and honour? Is it not a mark of the greatest arrogance and self-conceit, for the Rev. *Estimator*, to take it for granted, that Dr. Lowth did not borrow the expression of *bestriding the narrow World* from Shakespear, but from him; and that only, because he happened to have adopted it before? I have read a dull and stupid sermon, which was preached by a very precise fanatic, in the time of Charles the First, the title of which is, *GOD'S SLIPPER TRY'D ON*, and the text to it, *Over Edom have I cast out my shoe.* Now is it not as rational to suppose that Dr. Lowth borrowed the expression (which is to be found in the same sentence) of *casting out his shoe*, from this obscure and contemptible discourse, as that he should adopt the other from the *Estimate*?

For my own part, as a man of candour, I must fairly acquit him of both ; and cannot help supposing that as he borrowed the one from king David, so he was indebted for the other, to the king of dramatic poetry, the immortal Shakespear. What induces me the rather to this opinion is, that the learned author of the letter to Dr. W. is known to go to the fountain-head for his knowledge ; and is too wise to drink out of a broken and dirty pitcher, when it is so easy and convenient to him to draw out of the pure stream.

If the Rev. *Estimator* had been desirous of convincing the world, that he was really and in truth pointed out, by Dr. Lowth, in the sentence above quoted ; he ought to have produced some argument, some proof of it ; and not have imposed upon us only the slight suspicion of his own self-condemning mind. It is

a good old proverb, That the galled horse will wince ; and I am much mistaken if a person of Dr. B—'s disposition is not cloathed with pride (instead of humility) which has a peculiar quality of making one sore, and liable to flinch at every little rub. I am persuaded that a man of conscious honour and merit could not have applied to himself any thing, which we find in the *Letter to the Author of Divine Legation.* Before he would have charged Dr. Lowth with an intent of reflecting upon him, in making use of the expression of *bestriding the narrow world,* he would have considered whether this image is so forced and distant, so uncommon, and out of the beaten road, that it was next to an impossibility for two persons to stumble upon it. Now the direct contrary to this happens to be the case at present; for when a man is thinking of a huge, imperious, swoln, over-bearing

dema-

demagogue ; who looks down upon those beneath him with the utmost contempt and insolence ; and sees them, through the mirrour of self-conceit, no bigger, when compared with his mighty self, than shards and beetles ; can there be a more easy, natural image, than to resemble him to the Colossus of Rhodes ; that celebrated, *brazzen* statue, which was so towering and prodigious, that all the famous giants of antiquity, with Goliah at the head of them, compared to it would have appeared as very pygmies ? And having once caught this idea, it was almost impossible for a man, who had e'er read Shakespear, so as to relish him, not to remember his beautiful description of Cæsar under this image,

— Why man he doth *bestride* the narrow world,
Like a Colossus ! —

Having thus proved, and I hope to the satisfaction of my readers, that Dr. Lowth

might

might have come honestly by this expression, without stealing it from the Rev. Estimator (which by the bye is almost as bad as robbing a gibbet;) it follows that no indifferent person could collect, from any part of his *Letter to the Author of Divine Legation*, that Dr. B— is anywhere alluded to. Indeed if this touchy and suspicious gentleman would have kept his own counsel, we should never have found out, that there was the least possibility, that he should any way fall under Dr. Lowth's notice. But he was determined to shew us that he was, in *his own opinion* at least, of some consequence; and we may apply to him, with the greatest truth, what Parmeno says in Terence,

Egomet meo indicio, miser, quasi sorex perii!

But it may be asked, why any man should take such unnecessary trouble, as it appears at first sight, to acquit Dr.

Lowth

Lowth of a charge, which, if it was made good against him, seems to be altogether harmless and insignificant. It may not be impertinent therefore to make my readers acquainted with the extraordinary manner in which the Rev. Estimator applies the two sentences abovementioned, to his own purpose. Dr. Lowth, in his Letter to the Author of the Divine Legation of Moses, has taken very humorous notice of the different ways, in which this haughty Aristarch has thought proper to chastise those, who are daring enough to differ from him in matters only of curiosity and opinion. " I thought, says he, " you might possibly whip me, at the " cart's tail, in a note to *Divine Legation*, " the ordinary place of your literary executions; or pillory me in the Dunciad, " another engine, which, as legal proprietor, you have very ingeniously and " judiciously applied to the same purpose; " or

" or perhaps have ordered me a kind of
 " Bridewell correction, by one of your
 " BEADELS, in a *Pamphlet*."—Hinc illæ
Lacrymæ!—This is the ground of that
 complaint, which the Rev. *Estimator* pro-
 duces against Dr. Lowth; his whole Let-
 ter to whom is entirely taken up, in en-
 deavouring to make good his claim to one
 of these *beadle's places*. Now it seems, by
 his account of the matter, that they are
 in number *three*: one is occupied by the
 author of a pamphlet called the *Candid
Examiner*; the second by the author of
 the *Delicacy of Friendship*; and as to the
 third, you shall hear the *Estimator* speak
 for himself: " the third, says he, whom
 " all DISCERNING readers, who are con-
 " versant in MY WRITINGS, find clearly,
 " though not directly marked out as one
 " in this noble class of authors, is MY-
 " SELF." If this is really the case, I
 shall only say to him with Horace,

I bone quo *virtus tua te vocat!*—I pede fausto
Grandia latus meritorum præmia!

But why, in the name of wonder, must these *Beadle's places* be neither more nor less than three? Has the *Letter to the Author of the Divine Legation* expressly stinted them to this number? by no means—but there is a simile it seems in the *Letter*, which proves it in the prettiest manner imaginable: speaking of the *Demonstrator* of the *Divine Legation*, the ingenious author very wittily goes on; “ he puts me mightily in mind of king PIEROCHOLE, when he had taken the castle of Clermauld, by assault indeed, and in all forms—but without resistance; for the place was open and defenceless. Upon this foundation he sets up for universal monarchy; he makes an imaginary expedition through Europe, Africa, and Asia; his three ministers, the Duc de Manuail, Count Spaldassin,

" dassin, and Captain Merdail, persuade
 " him that he is the most puissant and
 " chivalrous Prince that ever appeared
 " since Alexander the Great; and that
 " he has actually conquered all the world:
 " and behold, he frightens the poor
 " Pope out of his wits, and seizes his
 " dominions; he vanquishes and bap-
 " tizes Barbarossa; he kills and slays all
 " the dog Turks and Mahometans; he
 " gives away countries, and disposes of
 " kingdoms; and bounces, blusters, and
 " swaggers, as if he were really sovereign
 " lord, and sole master of the universe."

This simile, which is one of the most happy that ever was conceived, and is inimitably just and descriptive, the Rev. *Estimator* presses into his service; and because Rabelais happened to give Pierochole *three* ministers, tells us, it proves to demonstration, that the *beadles* were neither more nor less than *three*. For my own

part, I cannot help thinking, that the simile would not have been a jot the less proper and apposite, whether the number of *beadles* had been *three* or *threescore*: it was meant to describe a person, who was so puffed up with self-opinion, and infatuated with pride, that he would believe any thing, however absurd and preposterous, which his tools and sycophants, (it does not matter how many there might be of them) thought proper to buzz into his ears.

But for argument-sake, rather than out of any particular affection to number *three*, I will even suppose that the *beadles* were exactly so many, and no more; and that *two* of these were the authors of the *Candid Examiner*, and the *Delicacy of Friendship*: but how does it thence follow, that the Estimator was the *third*? The passages, which he has produced, to prove that he was alluded to, are, as we

we have seen, insufficient and inconclusive; and he has supported his charge by no other arguments; unless, indeed, we will allow *his* application of the following passage, as further evidence in his favour.

The Author of the *Letter to the Demonstrator of the Divine Legation*, addressing himself to that gentleman, goes on, “Indeed, my Lord, it is a matter of common complaint, and a real hardship upon us free subjects of the Republic of Letters in general, that we cannot go on quietly and peaceably in the public road, upon the ordinary business of our calling, without meeting, at every turn, a sturdy bravo, who disputes our passage, claims the highway as his own, and falls upon us with his cudgel, if we do not keep just to the track in which he orders us to walk.”

Now is it possible that any thing can be plainer, than the true *literal* meaning of

this passage, which is clearly applied to his Lordship, and to **HIM ONLY?** Every one may see in an instant, *who* is the *sturdy bravo*, that claims the highway as his own; and is ready with his cudgel, at every turn, to dispute the passage. It does not, cannot mean, the *Estimator*; for what man, in his sober senses, ever thought *him* a *sturdy bravo*? Who ever heard of his carrying a cudgel, or disputing a passage with any one? No!— He is a poor, weak, miserable object; that may probably, in the high-road of literature, now and then stand in a man's way; but the least jostling in the world will overset him, and lay him sprawling in the dirt.

I will not trespass upon the patience of the public to examine the evidence which is produced by the *Estimator*, to prove that he is not a flatterer and sycophant to the Right Rev. Demonstrator of the *Di-*
vine

vine Legation of Moses. It is, I am per-
suaded, a matter of no moment to the
world, at what altar he may chuse to
offer up incense; and I am in hopes of
being forgiven, if I do not thumb over
what he is pleased to call, " My own
" *Writings*, " " and my own Letters," to
determine a point that is so insignificant.
Upon the whole, I may venture to pro-
nounce, that there never was so poor,
jejune, and impertinent a performance
obtruded upon the public, as this Letter
of the Estimator's to Dr. Lowth. It is
on too trifling a subject to have afforded
matter for a private correspondence; as
it contains nothing but one single point of
knowledge, which the world has long ago
been master of, viz. the importance of
Dr. Brown to himself. I wish it was in
my power to lessen this importance, as it
might be a means of raising another of a
different

different nature, by far more commendable and advantageous.

But I must own frankly, that I despair; for there are particular vices, which when they have once taken root in the mind, become so prevalent, that, like an inveterate family-disease, they are scarce ever to be eradicated. Of this kind are pride and vanity, in combating with which, all the weapons of wit and argument are vain, as they will elude the one, and are proof against the other. Indeed it would be absurd to the last degree, to expect either to rally, or reason, a man out of failings, to which he pertinaciously adheres, though they render him uneasy to himself, and hateful to others. Had the Estimator conducted himself through life with common prudence, modesty, and affability, he might have recommended himself, even by his ordinary abilities, to some share of the approbation of the

the world, and to the certain esteem of that contracted circle, in which it was intended by Providence that he should move. As the case now stands, he feels the reverse of this too sensibly, to make it necessary for me to say any thing upon the subject.

I cannot take leave of my readers, without acquainting them with the real motives which induced me to address myself in this public manner, to the Author of *a Letter to Dr. Lowth*. It moved my indignation, to see a person take advantage of the curiosity of the public, to introduce a vindication of himself and his writings, into a dispute, that appeared to me to have nothing to do with either. But the manner in which this vindication was conducted, was still more offensive and intolerable : it breathed such a spirit of self-conceit and assurance ; was so replete with the froth of vanity and affectation ; and so

totally unsupported by reasoning and argument ; in short, it was altogether such an affront upon the patience and understanding of the public, that I could not resist, as an individual (unfit it must be owned to enter the lists against so doughty a writer) to revenge the insult, as far as my poor abilities would allow me.

It was not any private pique or prejudice against the Estimator that spurred me on ; for I solemnly declare, that, so far from having received any personal injury from him, I am totally unconnected, and unacquainted with him. Nor was it partiality to Dr. Lowth, that induced me to this undertaking, as I am an utter stranger, even to his person. I admire indeed his great abilities in different walks of literature ; and have read his *Letter to the Right Reverend Author of the Divine Legislation*, with peculiar satisfaction and pleasure.

sure. But I have nothing to do with his disputes, which he is able to settle by himself, without standing in need of any one's assistance. Besides, he does not seem to me to have the least controversy with the Estimator, who has neither disproved his facts, nor invalidated his reasoning. If indeed, instead of vindicating himself and his writings, he had stept forth as an advocate for his patron ; who, as he tells us himself, did the same generous office to him, in introducing him to the world, which Mr. Pope appears to have done to Dr. Warburton ; if instead of making himself *the little Hero of each tale*, he had shewn that the *Demonstrator of the Divine Legation* was *in the right*, and Dr. Lowth *erroneous*, in the several points which he has debated in his ingenious Letter, in this case he would have fallen under the cognizance of that gentleman, and, *inconsiderable* as he is, would not, methinks,

methinks, have escaped, without a severe correction. But he has prudently avoided that, and subjected himself only to the lash of those, who, like myself, think they were imposed upon, by his late frivolous performance. In short, as I am clear of all personal ill-will to the Estimator, he must look upon this gentle severity as extorted from me by himself, and learn hereafter to have some regard and reverence for that public, from whom he has formerly received no inconsiderable favours. I am, with all proper respect, his most humble servant,

PUBLICUS.